



August 15, 2016

NH Site Evaluation Committee

RE: SEC Docket No. 2015-02

Dear Committee Members,

The New Hampshire Sierra Club (NHSC) is non-profit membership based organization that supports protecting the environment, public health, and the democratic right to discuss how to protect these high valued elements of our lives. NHSC was formed as a chapter in 1992 – 100 years after the national organization was formalized. The local chapter has over 10,000 members and supporters who prioritize issues from preserving open space, protecting our state parks, clean air, drinking water, and wild rivers. The chapter encourages our members and supporters to “Enjoy, explore, and protect the planet” across the country and the Granite State.

Further, a major priority for our chapter is climate change. We read reports from NOAA, NH Fish and Game, USDA, and the University of New Hampshire that the trends in climate are unprecedented, historic, and record breaking. No other consecutive thirteen months have been as hot and no other May as hot in the record books in our country – or the world. In June, they said that we are facing a new record for the hottest year without even getting half way through the calendar. The last warmest year to date was 2015. Last year. This is a climate trend of extremes. There is a declared drought in Hillsborough County – and the farmers are feeling it. There are no locally grown peaches in the northeast because of the warm spell and cold snap in February.

Environmental groups like NHSC are accused of always opposing something and never in support. We oppose unhealthy, dangerous fossil fuel energy like coal, tar sands oil, and fracked natural gas. We do support energy efficiency, solar, weatherization, geothermal, and wind.

The Sierra Club's members are over 2.1 million of your friends and neighbors with over 10,000 in New Hampshire. Inspired by nature, we work together to protect our communities and the planet. The Sierra Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization.

New Hampshire Sierra Club 40 North Main Street, Second Floor Concord, NH 03301

603/224-8222 FAX: 603/224-4719

www.sierraclub.org

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In fact, the Site Evaluation Committee said the project was appropriate for the environment in 2012. They stated that the project, as proposed then, *would not* have an unreasonable adverse effect on the natural environment or air and water quality. No rare or endangered plant species or exemplary natural communities were discovered by the Natural Heritage Bureau. Wildlife impacts for fish and mammal species in 2012 were declared minimal. For bird and bat wildlife, the concern was for raptors – the majestic bald eagles and others – but overall the subcommittee determined that the project *would not* have unreasonable adverse impacts on any wildlife, avian or otherwise. Since 2012, the project footprint has been significantly reduced and conservation land has been significantly increased. There will be more acreage for the wildlife to gather, live, raise new generations, and rest.

The project includes over 900 acres for new land protections that would otherwise not be available for conservation. The good people at the Harris Center recognize that land protection in the area is a significant win for land preservation in New Hampshire and happily joined the land easement agreements. The protection of the area is in fact part of their grand scheme of land protection called the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership between New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Again, the wind project includes lands that were beyond the reach of the 27 private and public partners. These newly protected acres demonstrate the wind project's efforts to contribute to the broader land protection goals of the community.

The wind proposal continues the vision of the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership, Pillsbury-Sunapee Highlands, and the Sunapee-Kearsarge-Ragged Greenway. There are no public lands or state protected qualifying natural communities in the area of the wind turbines – nothing even close to the old growth located in Mount Sunapee State Park or in the White Mountain National Forests. However, the protections are meaningful and help create stronger, more diverse landscapes on private land. The Nature Conservancy stated that the wind project was in the public interest. Again these are acres that were not going to be part of the larger efforts until the wind developer came to town.

The wind project before you in Docket 2015-02 is the product of adopted suggestions of the process and committee members passed. The turbines are shorter and quieter. There are nine instead of ten turbines. The project will impact 60 total acres and occupy just over 11 acres. Only 2.5 percent of those in the 10 mile view shed will actually see the wind turbines. There is a plan in place for decommissioning. These are all terrific improvements thanks to those people involved in the regulating process and the committee members of the Site Evaluation Committee.

This is not the time to ignore the facts about climate change. Our state, the country, and consumers need alternatives to fossil fuels. The wind proposal is a better project that respects the regional land protection vision, minimizes risk, and helps create a clean energy future.

New Hampshire Sierra Club requests that the Committee approve the Antrim Wind Energy Project.

Thank you for considering our perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine M. Corkery". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Catherine M. Corkery

Chapter Director
Senior Field Organizer
New Hampshire Sierra Club
40 North Main Street 2nd Floor
Concord, NH 03301
Office: [603-224-8222](tel:603-224-8222)
catherine.corkery@sierraclub.org
<http://www.sierraclub.org/new-hampshire>